

African Elephant Conservation Fund



In the last century, rampant ivory poaching and habitat loss caused African elephant numbers to drop from over ten million animals in 1900 to fewer than 500,000 by the late 1980's.

Uncontrolled hunting for ivory and meat, and loss of habitat continue to threaten the African elephant today.

People often rely on wild animals as a source of meat (commonly referred to as 'bushmeat'). As populations increase, the demand for bushmeat within Africa is skyrocketing. To make matters worse, people from urban centers and from other continents are increasingly looking to Africa's forests as sources of wild products. This uncontrolled hunting is stripping Africa's wilderness areas of elephants and other coveted game animals.

In addition to the ivory and bushmeat trades, the loss of natural elephant habitat and the resulting conflict between elephants and humans threaten elephant survival throughout Africa. As human populations grow and expand into remote areas, natural habitat is



Elephant herd drinking in Tarangire National Park, Tanzania

Richard Ruggiero/USFWS

cleared and destroyed to make way for agriculture. Elephant populations are compressed into smaller ranges with limited food and water supplies. Hungry elephants may wander into villages and damage crops. People often kill elephants in an attempt to stop the crop raids and people are also sometimes killed trying to fend off elephants.

The specific threats to elephants vary in severity from region to region. Central Africa has been plagued by political instability and civil war which have led to an increased flow of guns into the region and unabated flow of ivory out. Economic hardship has driven people to use these weapons to kill elephants for food and for ivory.

By contrast, in well protected areas of Southern Africa, elephant numbers have stabilized or even increased. In some parks, elephants suffer from crowding due to loss of habitat and blockage of migration routes.

In East Africa, elephant populations have decreased by 65 percent due to poaching and land conversion. Where elephants persist, conflict with humans is on the rise.

In 1988, the United States Congress passed the African Elephant Conservation Act to establish a fund to help protect, conserve, and manage African elephants. Special emphasis was placed on fortifying protection for elephants in countries with uncontrolled poaching, and developing conservation plans throughout the elephants' range.



Patrick Chiyo, Duke University collecting elephant dung in Amboseli, Kenya for genetic analysis of crop raiding behaviors © Jenny Tung

The 2009 Congressional appropriation of \$2 million which leveraged over \$11.2 million in matching funds, funded 33 African elephant projects, including the following efforts:

- Rebuild a ranger post for the Congolese national wildlife authority (ICCN) in Kabaraza, in northern DRC, to improve security for elephants and other wildlife and around Queen Elizabeth Park, Uganda and Virunga National Park, DRC.
- To advance the new transfrontier conservation initiative between Ethiopia and neighboring South Sudan, conduct aerial and ground surveys on elephant and other large mammal distribution, map current land uses and potential conflict areas in southwestern Ethiopia, and use the results to develop an elephant conservation plan.
- Support to create a joint team of scouts from various community-owned conservancies in key elephant areas in Kenya's arid northern rangelands, including the Mathews Range and the area east of the mountains in Samburu, Isiolo and Marsabit South districts.
- Assistance to Kenya's national wildlife authority to better equip and train scouts in order to improve security for elephants on the northern coast. Specific activities will include training rangers to monitor elephant populations, providing handheld global positioning systems and night vision binoculars for rangers, and deploying patrols in targeted areas to better address threats.
- Support in and around Lac Tele Community Reserve to operate control posts on major transit routes to prevent illegal trafficking of bushmeat and other wildlife products and to analyze patterns of illegal activity in order to better focus protection efforts.
- Deploy tracking collars on elephants in northern Kruger National Park, South Africa and Gonarezhou, Zimbabwe in order to identify elephant corridors and range use to better inform strategic plans for the new Great Limpopo transfrontier conservation area.
- Support local community scouts for anti-poaching and wildlife conflict resolution outside South Luangwa National Park, Zambia and provide training to conduct emergency veterinary operations to rescue elephants and other wildlife caught and injured in poachers' snares.
- Deploy acoustic recording units at remote clearings and road access points in the Central African forest in Congo and Gabon. The recording units can detect elephant vocalizations and human disturbances linked to poaching (including vehicles and gunshots). The grantee will work with the conservation authorities and logging companies to employ this technology to improve security for elephants and other wildlife.



Tom Lalampa of Northern Rangelands Trust and big bulls at Namunyak, Kenya Michelle Gadd/USFWS

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
International Affairs
Division of International Conservation
4401 N. Fairfax Drive, Room 100
Arlington, VA 22203
703-358-1754
703-358-2115/fax
internationalconservation@fws.gov
<http://www.fws.gov/international>
CFDA# 15.620

February 2010



African Elephant Conservation Funding History from 2005 through 2009	
Total Number of Grant Proposals Received	288
Total Number of Grants Awarded	145
Percentage of Countries with African Elephants Receiving Grants	100%
Total Amount Appropriated by U.S. Congress	\$7,615,956
Total Funds Distributed through Grants	\$7,696,000
Total Funds to Administration of Grants	\$437,259
Total Matching/In-kind Funds Leveraged by Grants	\$22,683,000